

K-STATE RESEARCHER SAYS MINIATURIZED LIKENESS IS A CONVERSATION STARTER



When K-State's Daniel Fung, professor of animal sciences and industry and of food science, helps organize a seminar or make a conference presentation, he usually receives a small token of appreciation: a lapel pin, a personalized pen or other goodies.

But when he was presented with an 18-inch-tall likeness of himself at the 2007 *Metodos Rápidos y Automatización en Microbiología Alimentaria* conference in Barcelona, Spain, he was caught a little bit off guard.

"I was completely, totally floored -- and I'm a pretty composed human being," Fung said.

The likeness is a spectacle-wearing statue donning a Hawaiian-style shirt under a lab coat. In one hand is a miniaturized version of a Fung-Yu Tube -- one of Fung's inventions -- and peeking out from a pocket is a salmonella appearing to be making a break for it.

The only words Fung remembers being able to muster: "This looks like me!"

The statue was given to him by Joseph Yuste, who studied under Fung as a postdoctoral researcher at K-State. Yuste organizes and runs the workshop in

Barcelona, which is based on Fung's annual Rapid Methods and Automation in Microbiology Workshop at K-State. Fung's workshop has catered to more than 4,000 scientists from across the world over the last 29 years. The statuette also came with a smaller version of that year's conference program, in which people wrote messages to Fung thanking him for his contributions.

When "mini-Fung" was given, Yuste's workshop was in its fifth year and he wanted to do something special for the man who had done so much to guide him professionally and help get the Barcelona workshop going.

Yuste commissioned an artist in Barcelona to create the statuette.

"The guy never saw me," Fung said. "He just worked off pictures."

When asked whether it was ironic that the man who had miniaturized so many of the processes used to rapidly detect dangerous pathogens in food and water had now, himself, suffered the same fate, Fung said that he was touched by the sentiment.



"Mini-Fung" sits under a glass dome in Fung's office. It is often a conversation starter and is educational, too.

Fung said that the reactions from people entering his Call Hall office vary from "What is that?" to "Wow, that's cute!" He then uses it to talk about how important the ability to rapidly detect food-borne pathogens is for protecting public health.

"It's cute and it's also scientific because my invention is there. Also, there is a salmonella there that tells people that they can be contaminated," Fung said. "It shows that this old professor is very happy giving lectures in very colorful dress, which I've done and do still."

Fung said the statue pretty much sums up who he is.

"That's my life, all right there," he said.